

REMARKS

I. Introduction

In response to the Office Action dated March 1, 2006, claims 1, 5, and 7 have been amended. Claims 1-30 remain in the application. Re-examination and re-consideration of the application, as amended, is requested.

II. Claim Amendments

Applicants' attorney has made amendments to the claims as indicated above. These amendments were made solely for the purpose of clarifying the language of the claims, and were not required for patentability or to distinguish the claims over the prior art.

III. Non-Art Rejections

On page (2) of the Office Action, claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants have amended claim 7 to overcome this rejection and submit that the rejection is now moot.

IV. Prior Art Rejections

On pages (2)-(3) of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 10-12, 14-16, 18, 20-22, 24-26, 28, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Liu et al., Optic Letters (Liu). On pages(3)-(4) of the Office Action, claims 3, 13, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu in view of Case, U.S. Patent No. 4,386,414 (Case). On page (4) of the Office Action, claims 9, 17, 19, 27, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu in view of George et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,752,130 (George).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. Applicants note that the present application was filed on July 25, 2003 and claimed priority to a provisional application filed on July 25, 2002. The primary reference cited in the Office Action was that of Liu which was published on May 15, 2002. Accordingly, the reference does not qualify as a reference under 102(b) since it was not described in a printed publication more than one year prior to the priority date of the present

application. In this regard, Liu's publication date is less than one year prior to the priority date of the present application

In addition to the above, Applicants submit a declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.132 signed by the inventors of the present application that indicates that the subject matter described in Liu is a description of the inventor's invention. In fact, inventorship between Liu and the present invention overlaps. In view of the declaration and MPEP 716.10, Applicants submit that the Liu reference cannot be used as a valid 35 U.S.C. §102(a) reference either. In view of the above, Applicants submit that the rejections have been overcome and the application is in condition for allowance.

Thus, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 11, and 21 are allowable over the valid cited references. Further, dependent claims 2-10, 12-20, and 22-30 are submitted to be allowable over the cited references in the same manner, because they are dependent on independent claims 1, 11, and 21, respectively, and thus contain all the limitations of the independent claims. In addition, dependent claims 2-10, 12-20, and 22-30 recite additional novel elements not shown by the cited references.

V. Conclusion

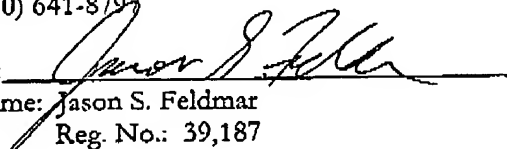
In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is now in good order for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner believe minor matters still remain that can be resolved in a telephone interview, the Examiner is urged to call Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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